(a) whether it is a fact that starch manufactured from Tapioca is exempted from Excise Duty charges;

(b) whether it is also a fact that stach manufactured from maize for export is charged Excise Duty @ 16 per cent;

(c) if so, whether it is also a fact that production of maize in the country shall be adversely affected;

(d) if so, whether there is any proposal under consideration of Government to treat both the starches produced from Maize and Tapioca at par to remove hardship of maize growing farmers;

(e) if so, the details thereof; and

(f) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI GINGEE N. RAMACHANDRAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) No. Sir.

(c) to (f) Do not arise in view of (b) above.

Violation of FERA Act by foreign companies

2631. PROF. M. SANKARALINGAM: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the names of the foreign companies who have violated the FERA Act during the last three years;

(b) whether Government have initiated any legal proceedings against them;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI GINGEE N. RAMACHANDRAN): (a) Sir, the foreign companies involved in violation of Foreign Exchange Regulation Act, 1973 are M/s. Orbit Call Inc. U.S.A., M/s. WPI Inc. U.S.A. and M/s. Asia Today Limited, Hong Kong.

(b) Show Cause Notices have been issued for violation of FERA.

(c) The details of Show Cause Notices issued are as under:—

(i) M/s. Orbit Calls Inc. U.S.A., under Section 29(1)(a) of FERA, 1973.

(ii) M/s. WPI Inc. U.S.A. under Section 29(1)(a) of FERA, 1973.

(iii) Three Show Cause notices have been issued against M/s. Asia Today Limited, Hong-Kong under section 29(1)(a) read with section 68(1) of FERA, 1973.

(d) Does not arise.

Deposits in foreign banks

†2632. SHRI SHYAM LAL: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) the total amount of debt of foreign banks and other foreign debts till 31st March, 2000 and the total interest payable thereupon by 31st March, 2001;

(b) whether it is a fact that citizens of this country have deposited their money in foreign banks;

(c) if so, the total amount of such deposits;

(d) whether this money can be brought back to India;

(e) if so, whether any such scheme is being formulated by Government; and

(f) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI BALA SAHEB VIKHEPATIL): (a) The latest information on India's external debt is available as on end-September 2000. The total amount of external debt outstanding of India stood at US Dollar 98,435 million at end-March 2000 and US Dollar 97,860 million at end-September 2000. The total interest payments on external debt during 1999-2000 amounted to US Dollar 4,912 million compared to US Dollar 4,781 million in 1998-99.

(b) Any person resident outside India for a continuous period of one year or more and returned to India on or after 18th April, 1992 enjoys general permission to keep his assets including deposits in banks abroad, out of his earnings abroad without Reserve Bank of India permission. Further, a person

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.